

**Consul General's 9/11 Commemoration Address
Australian Intercultural Society's
Open Day at the Sunshine Mosque
Sunday, September 10, 2006, 1:25pm**

Mr. Ergun Kirmaci, Chairperson of the Australian Intercultural Society;

Mr. Orhan Cicek, Executive Advisor of the Australian Intercultural Society;

Mr. Ibrahim Dellal, President of the Sunshine Mosque Society;

Imam Ilyas, Imam of the Sunshine Mosque;

Other Members of the Clergy;
Members of the Consular Corps;
Ladies and Gentlemen:

Assalamu aleikum.

Thank you for inviting me to the third Mosque Open Day. I am pleased to be among Australians, great friends of the United States.

Tomorrow will mark the fifth anniversary of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States homeland.

Sadly, the anniversary is a reminder of the inhumanity of terrorist mass murderers whom the world must confront.

No faith condones the deliberate killing of innocent civilians, and no cause or grievance - no matter how legitimate - can ever justify it.

Terrorism has brought tragedy, destruction, death and terrible grief to innocent people across the world, from Indonesia to Morocco, Spain, Jordan, England, India, Turkey and Egypt.

The victims of September 11th were citizens of more than 90 different countries and adherents of many faiths, including Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

Ten Australians perished in the attack: Kevin Dennis, Alberto Dominguez, Elisa Ferraina, Craig Gibson, Peter Gyulavary, Yvonne Kennedy, Andrew Knox, Lesley Thomas, Steve Tompsett, and Leanne Whiteside. We honor their memory and pray that their families' burden of grief may be lightened with the passage of time.

Those who were responsible for September 11 and those who may be behind the most recent mass murder plot in London, have long targeted innocent people.

The ideology of those violent extremists uses a perverted religiosity to justify murder, terror, and violence.

Their agenda is to impose a tyrannical regime on the many proud and sovereign nations of the Islamic world, and they have nothing but intolerance for all those who do not share their extremist beliefs - including fellow Muslims.

Such actions are always abhorrent and always wrong, and the international community, the interfaith community and decent men and women everywhere must speak out against those who advocate hate, violence and terrorism. Our clear message must be that killing oneself and murdering innocent people is always wrong.

All major religions share a commitment to social justice, compassion, concern for the poor, and love of family and community.

The color of our skin, the language we speak, or the way we worship may be different.

Nevertheless, people everywhere aspire to speak their minds, participate in their society, worship freely, and pursue education, jobs and greater opportunities for their families.

The United States is doing its part to confront common threats and ease human suffering.

We are working in partnership with countries throughout the Islamic world to improve the lives of Muslims.

For example, the United States is the largest bilateral donor of aid to the Palestinian people.

And Americans were the largest providers of help to Muslims affected by the tsunami in Indonesia and the earthquake in Pakistan.

As we look back on September 11, 2001, we also look forward. We work in a spirit of partnership with people and nations across the world to confront this ideology of hate and foster a climate of hope and opportunity.

We are all far from perfect, yet we believe the ideals of freedom and justice that guide us are right and true for people everywhere.

And on the fifth anniversary of this most serious, unprecedented and unprovoked attack on the continental United States, we Americans renew our commitment to our founding conviction that all people are equal and equally deserving of justice, respect, opportunity and dignity.

Thank you.